

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
HOUSTON DIVISION**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

**ROSEMONDE LOWE,
aka ROSEMONDE RUSSELL,
aka ROSEMONDE WADE,
Defendant.**

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CRIMINAL NO. 4:20-CR-00002

PLEA AGREEMENT

The United States of America, by and through Ryan K. Patrick, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Texas, and Benjamin C. Sandel, Special Assistant United States Attorney, and the defendant, Rosemonde Lowe (“Defendant”), and Defendant’s counsel, pursuant to Rule 11(c)(1)(A) and 11(c)(1)(B) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, state that they have entered into an agreement, the terms and conditions of which are as follows:

Defendant’s Agreement

1. Defendant agrees to plead guilty to Count One of the Information. Count One charges Defendant with Theft of Government Property Greater than \$1,000, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 641. Defendant, by entering this plea, agrees that she is waiving any right to have the facts that the law makes essential to the punishment either charged in the Information, or proved to a jury or proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

Punishment Range

2. The **statutory** maximum penalty for each violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 641, is imprisonment of not more than 10 years and a fine of not more than \$250,000. Additionally, Defendant may receive a term of supervised release after imprisonment of up to three years. See Title 18, United States Code, sections 3559(a)(3) and 3583(b)(2). Defendant

acknowledges and understands that if she should violate the conditions of any period of supervised release which may be imposed as part of her sentence, then Defendant may be imprisoned for up to two years, without credit for time already served on the term of supervised release prior to such violation. *See* Title 18, United States Code, sections 3559(a)(3) and 3583(e)(3). Defendant understands that she cannot have the imposition or execution of the sentence suspended, nor is she eligible for parole.

Mandatory Special Assessment

3. Pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, section 3013(a)(2)(A), immediately after sentencing, Defendant will pay to the Clerk of the United States District Court a special assessment in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per count of conviction. The payment will be by cashier's check or money order, payable to the Clerk of the United States District Court, c/o District Clerk's Office, P.O. Box 61010, Houston, Texas 77208, Attention: Finance.

Immigration Consequences

4. Defendant recognizes that pleading guilty may have consequences with respect to her immigration status. Defendant understands that if she is not a citizen of the United States, by pleading guilty she may be removed from the United States, denied citizenship, and denied admission to the United States in the future. Defendant understands that if she is a naturalized United States citizen, pleading guilty may result in immigration consequences, such as denaturalization and potential deportation or removal from the United States. Defendant's attorney has advised Defendant of the potential immigration consequences resulting from Defendant's plea of guilty, and Defendant affirms that she wants to plead guilty regardless of any immigration consequences that may result from the guilty plea and conviction.

Waiver of Appeal and Collateral Review

5. Defendant is aware that Title 28, United States Code, section 1291, and Title 18, United States Code, section 3742, afford a defendant the right to appeal the conviction and sentence imposed. Defendant is also aware that Title 28, United States Code, section 2255, affords the right to contest or “collaterally attack” a conviction or sentence after the judgment of conviction and sentence has become final. Defendant knowingly and voluntarily waives the right to appeal or “collaterally attack” the conviction and sentence, except that Defendant does not waive the right to raise a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel on direct appeal, if otherwise permitted, or on collateral review in a motion under Title 28, United States Code, section 2255. In the event Defendant files a notice of appeal following the imposition of the sentence or later collaterally attacks her conviction or sentence, the United States will assert its rights under this agreement and seek specific performance of these waivers.

6. In agreeing to these waivers, Defendant is aware that a sentence has not yet been determined by the Court. Defendant is also aware that any estimate of the possible sentencing range under the sentencing guidelines that she may have received from her counsel, the United States or the Probation Office, is a prediction and not a promise, did not induce her guilty plea, and is not binding on the United States, the Probation Office or the Court. The United States does not make any promise or representation concerning what sentence the defendant will receive. Defendant further understands and agrees that the United States Sentencing Guidelines are “effectively advisory” to the Court. *See United States v. Booker*, 543 U.S. 220 (2005). Accordingly, Defendant understands that, although the Court must consult the Sentencing

Guidelines and must take them into account when sentencing Defendant, the Court is not bound to follow the Sentencing Guidelines nor sentence Defendant within the calculated guideline range.

7. Defendant understands and agrees that each and all waivers contained in the Agreement are made in exchange for the concessions made by the United States in this plea agreement.

The United States' Agreements

8. The United States agrees to each of the following:

(a) If the Defendant makes a payment of at least \$10,000 towards an anticipated order of restitution to the registry of the Court after the entry of her guilty plea and before sentencing, the United States will not oppose Defendant's anticipated request for a sentence of probation.

(b) If the Court determines that Defendant qualifies for an adjustment under section 3E1.1(a) of the United States Sentencing Guidelines, and the offense level prior to operation of section 3E1.1(a) is 16 or greater, the United States will move under section 3E1.1(b) for an additional one-level reduction because Defendant timely notified authorities of her intent to plead guilty, thereby permitting the United States to avoid preparing for trial and permitting the United States and the Court to allocate their resources more efficiently.

Agreement Binding - Southern District of Texas Only

9. The United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas agrees that it will not further criminally prosecute Defendant in the Southern District of Texas for offenses arising from conduct charged in the Information. This plea agreement binds only the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas and Defendant. It does not bind any other United States Attorney's Office. The United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas will bring this plea agreement and the full extent of Defendant's cooperation to the attention of other prosecuting offices, if requested.

United States' Non-Waiver of Appeal

10. The United States reserves the right to carry out its responsibilities under guidelines sentencing. Specifically, the United States reserves the right:

- (a) to bring its version of the facts of this case, including its evidence file and any investigative files, to the attention of the Probation Office in connection with that office's preparation of a presentence report;
- (b) to set forth or dispute sentencing factors or facts material to sentencing;
- (c) to seek resolution of such factors or facts in conference with Defendant's counsel and the Probation Office;
- (d) to file a pleading relating to these issues, in accordance with section 6A1.2 of the United States Sentencing Guidelines and Title 18, United States Code, section 3553(a); and
- (e) to appeal the sentence imposed or the manner in which it was determined.

Sentence Determination

11. Defendant is aware that the sentence will be imposed after consideration of the United States Sentencing Guidelines and Policy Statements, which are only advisory, as well as the provisions of Title 18, United States Code, section 3553(a). Defendant nonetheless acknowledges and agrees that the Court has authority to impose any sentence up to and including the statutory maximum set for the offense(s) to which Defendant pleads guilty, and that the sentence to be imposed is within the sole discretion of the sentencing judge after the Court has consulted the applicable Sentencing Guidelines. Defendant understands and agrees that the parties' positions regarding the application of the Sentencing Guidelines do not bind the Court and that the sentence imposed is within the discretion of the sentencing judge. If the Court should impose any sentence up to the maximum established by statute, or should the Court order any or all of the sentences

imposed to run consecutively, Defendant cannot, for that reason alone, withdraw a guilty plea, and will remain bound to fulfill all of the obligations under this plea agreement.

Rights at Trial

12. Defendant understands that by entering into this agreement, she surrenders certain rights as provided in this plea agreement. Defendant understands that the rights of a defendant include the following:

(a) If Defendant persisted in a plea of not guilty to the charges, defendant would have the right to a speedy jury trial with the assistance of counsel. The trial may be conducted by a judge sitting without a jury if Defendant, the United States, and the court all agree.

(b) At a trial, the United States would be required to present witnesses and other evidence against Defendant. Defendant would have the opportunity to confront those witnesses and her attorney would be allowed to cross-examine them. In turn, Defendant could, but would not be required to, present witnesses and other evidence on her own behalf. If the witnesses for Defendant would not appear voluntarily, she could require their attendance through the subpoena power of the court; and

(c) At a trial, Defendant could rely on a privilege against self-incrimination and decline to testify, and no inference of guilt could be drawn from such refusal to testify. However, if Defendant desired to do so, she could testify on her own behalf.

Factual Basis for Guilty Plea

13. Defendant is pleading guilty because she is in fact guilty of the charges contained in Count One of the Information. If this case were to proceed to trial, the United States could prove each element of the offense beyond a reasonable doubt. The United States would offer the following facts, among others, to establish Defendant's guilt:

Ms. Josette Russell applied for and began receiving Social Security retirement benefits in 1992. Ms. Russell died on June 10, 2012. The Social Security Administration (SSA), unaware of Ms. Russell's death, continued to

disburse monthly retirement benefits into Ms. Russell's bank account until SSA became aware of Ms. Russell's death and stopped the benefits in September 2018.

At the time of Ms. Russell's death, SSA was depositing her monthly benefits into a savings account at NVE Bank. This account was held jointly by Mr. Russell and her daughter, Rosemonde Lowe, aka Rosemonde Russell, aka Rosemonde Wade, the defendant. The defendant was also a joint account holder with Ms. Russell on a checking account at NVE Bank. Bank records reveal that, after Ms. Russell's death, the defendant regularly transferred the Social Security benefits from the savings account into the checking account. Defendant then converted the money from the joint checking account to her own use.

In the months following Ms. Russell's death, the defendant wrote eight personal checks against the checking account. Defendant wrote the first seven of those checks payable to herself. The last hand-written check, negotiated in March 2013, was signed by the defendant in her own name and written to John Lowe, defendant's husband.

Thereafter, from August 2013 through July 2017, the defendant negotiated 28 electronically generated checks against the NVE Bank checking account. Defendant created each of these electronic checks by accessing the checking account and requesting the transactions online. Each of the 28 electronic checks was paid to the order of "Corporate Learning Resources, Inc.". The majority of these electronic checks were endorsed in writing to "CL Resources" or "CL Resources Inc.". However, three of the checks were endorsed, in writing, in defendant's name.

Corporate Learning Resources, Inc. is a domestic, for-profit corporation in which the defendant is the sole officer. The defendant filed the Articles of Incorporation in Broward County, Florida, on July 18, 2005. The current address of Corporate Learning Resources, Inc. is a box at a United Parcel Service Store in Houston, Texas.

Corporate Learning Resources, Inc. maintains a business checking account with J.P. Morgan Chase Bank. The defendant is the sole signer on the

account. The address associated with the account is defendant's home address in Houston, Texas. Transactions from 2012 through 2019 reveal the ATM/Debit card associated with the account is used extensively in-and-around Houston, Texas. A comparison of the bank records confirm that each of the 28 electronically generated checks from Ms. Russell's NVE Bank checking account were deposited into the Corporate Learning Resources, Inc. bank account at J.P. Morgan Chase Bank.

From approximately July 2012 through approximately August 2018, defendant stole and converted to her own use \$93,030 in Social Security retirement benefits intended for the benefit of defendant's deceased mother, which money defendant knew she was not entitled to receive.

Breach of Plea Agreement

14. If Defendant should fail in any way to fulfill completely all of the obligations under this plea agreement, the United States will be released from its obligations under the plea agreement, and Defendant's plea and sentence will stand. If at any time Defendant retains, conceals, or disposes of assets in violation of this plea agreement, or if Defendant knowingly withholds evidence or is otherwise not completely truthful with the United States, then the United States may move the Court to set aside the guilty plea and reinstate prosecution. Any information and documents that have been disclosed by Defendant, whether prior to or subsequent to this plea agreement, and all leads derived therefrom, will be used against defendant in any prosecution.

Restitution, Forfeiture, and Fines – Generally

15. This Plea Agreement is being entered into by the United States on the basis of Defendant's express representation that she will make a full and complete disclosure of all assets over which she exercises direct or indirect control, or in which she has any financial interest. Defendant agrees not to dispose of any assets or take any action that would effect a transfer of

property in which she has an interest, unless Defendant obtains the prior written permission of the United States.

16. Defendant agrees to make complete financial disclosure by truthfully executing a sworn financial statement (Form OBD-500 or similar form) within 14 days of signing this plea agreement. Defendant agrees to authorize the release of all financial information requested by the United States, including, but not limited to, executing authorization forms permitting the United States to obtain tax information, bank account records, credit histories, and social security information. Defendant agrees to discuss and answer any questions by the United States relating to Defendant's complete financial disclosure.

17. Defendant agrees to take all steps necessary to pass clear title to forfeitable assets to the United States and to assist fully in the collection of restitution and fines, including, but not limited to, surrendering title, executing a warranty deed, signing a consent decree, stipulating to facts regarding the transfer of title and the basis for the forfeiture, and signing any other documents necessary to effectuate such transfer. Defendant also agrees to direct any banks which have custody of her assets to deliver all funds and records of such assets to the United States.

18. Defendant understands that forfeiture, restitution, and fines are separate components of sentencing and are separate obligations.

Restitution

19. Defendant agrees to pay full restitution to the victim(s) regardless of the count(s) of conviction. Defendant stipulates and agrees that as a result of her criminal conduct, the victim(s) incurred a monetary loss of at least \$93,030. Defendant understands and agrees that the Court will determine the amount of restitution to fully compensate the victim(s). Defendant agrees that

restitution imposed by the Court will be due and payable immediately and that Defendant will not attempt to avoid or delay payment. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 5 above, Defendant waives the right to challenge in any manner, including by direct appeal or in a collateral proceeding, the restitution order imposed by the Court. Defendant understands that nothing in this Plea Agreement limits the authority of any government agency to recover any overpayment as otherwise authorized by law, including an offset against Defendant's future benefits.

Forfeiture

20. Defendant stipulates and agrees that the property listed in the Information's Notice of Forfeiture (and in any supplemental Notices) is subject to forfeiture, and Defendant agrees to the forfeiture of that property.

21. Defendant stipulates and agrees that Defendant obtained at least \$93,030 from the criminal offenses and that the factual basis for her guilty plea supports the forfeiture of \$93,030. Defendant stipulates and admits that one or more of the conditions set forth in Title 21, United States Code, section 853(p), exists. Defendant agrees to forfeit any of Defendant's property in substitution, up to a total forfeiture of \$93,030. Defendant agrees to the imposition of a personal money judgment in that amount.

22. Defendant agrees to waive any and all interest in any asset which is the subject of a related administrative or judicial forfeiture proceeding, whether criminal or civil, federal or state.

23. Defendant consents to the order of forfeiture becoming final as to Defendant immediately following this guilty plea, pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 32.2(b)(4)(A).

24. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 5 above, Defendant waives the right to challenge the forfeiture of property in any manner, including by direct appeal or in a collateral proceeding.

Fines

25. Defendant understands that under the Sentencing Guidelines the Court is permitted to order Defendant to pay a fine that is sufficient to reimburse the government for the costs of any imprisonment or term of supervised release, if any. Defendant agrees that any fine imposed by the Court will be due and payable immediately, and Defendant will not attempt to avoid or delay payment. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 5 above, Defendant waives the right to challenge the fine in any manner, including by direct appeal or in a collateral proceeding.

Complete Agreement

26. This written plea agreement, consisting of 14 pages, including the attached addendum of Defendant and her attorney, constitutes the complete plea agreement between the United States, Defendant, and Defendant's counsel. No promises or representations have been made by the United States except as set forth in writing in this plea agreement. Defendant acknowledges that no threats have been made against her and that she is pleading guilty freely and voluntarily because she is guilty.

27. Any modification of this plea agreement must be in writing and signed by all parties.

Filed at Houston, Texas, on February 24, 2020.

[Signature]
Defendant

Subscribed and sworn to before me on February 24, 2020.

DAVID J. BRADLEY, Clerk
UNITED STATES DISTRICT CLERK

By:

[Signature]
Deputy United States District Clerk

APPROVED:

Ryan K. Patrick
United States Attorney

By:

[Signature]
Benjamin C. Sandel
Special Assistant United States Attorney
Southern District of Texas
Telephone: 713-567-9726

[Signature]
Rodney A. Brown
Attorney for Defendant

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CRIMINAL NO.

PLEA AGREEMENT -- ADDENDUM

I have fully explained to Defendant her rights with respect to the pending Information. I have reviewed the provisions of the United States Sentencing Commission's Guidelines Manual and Policy Statements and I have fully and carefully explained to Defendant the provisions of those Guidelines which may apply in this case. I have also explained to Defendant that the Sentencing Guidelines are only advisory and the court may sentence Defendant up to the maximum allowed by statute per count of conviction. Further, I have carefully reviewed every part of this plea agreement with Defendant. To my knowledge, Defendant's decision to enter into this agreement is an informed and voluntary one.



Rodney A. Brown
Attorney for Defendant

3/24/2020
Date

I have consulted with my attorney and fully understand all my rights with respect to the Information pending against me. My attorney has fully explained, and I understand, all my rights with respect to the provisions of the United States Sentencing Commission's Guidelines Manual which may apply in my case. I have read and carefully reviewed every part of this plea agreement with my attorney. I understand this agreement and I voluntarily agree to its terms.

Blorve
Defendant

2/24/20
Date